3. The scheme which the experts have devised in order to meet these aims is to fill the reactor compartment with concrete, to tow the submarine to the dump site and to scuttle it in a controlled manner using explosive charges. The use of concrete maximises the integrity of the containment during descent and upon impact, and prevents access by submersibles. The experts are confident that the submarine would reach the seabed intact. The disposal would be in waters some 4000 4-4,700m deep, and in a site approved by the Nuclear Energy Agency (NEA) of the OECD for the dumping of radioactive waste. It should be noted that the NEA dump site is subject to a scientific review every five years, in order to confirm that it remains suitable for the disposal of radioactive waste. The next such review is scheduled to take place in 1990. While we have no reason to believe that the review will not be favourable, the existence of this mechanism needs to be taken into account when considering a programme to dump a series of submarines.

In view of the LDC Moratorium - it is not clear that such a decision will in fact be made

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

4. The chief multilateral instrument which affects sea disposal is the 1972 London Dumping Convention (LDC). Although this bans the dumping of high level waste, it permits the disposal at sea of ~~lower~~ intermediate & Does ~~level~~ waste, subject to certain procedures being carried out (the reactor compartment of a decommissioned nuclear submarine consists of short-lived intermediate level waste.) At the 1983 LDC consultative meeting, a moratorium was passed on sea-disposal of radioactive waste: however, the UK voted against it and the moratorium is non-binding. The collective view in Whitehall is that sea-disposal of large decommissioned items such as submarines would not contravene